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# AIR WAR COLLEGE

## RESEARCH REPORT



PERSPECTIVES ON THE ISLAMIC MIDDLE EAST

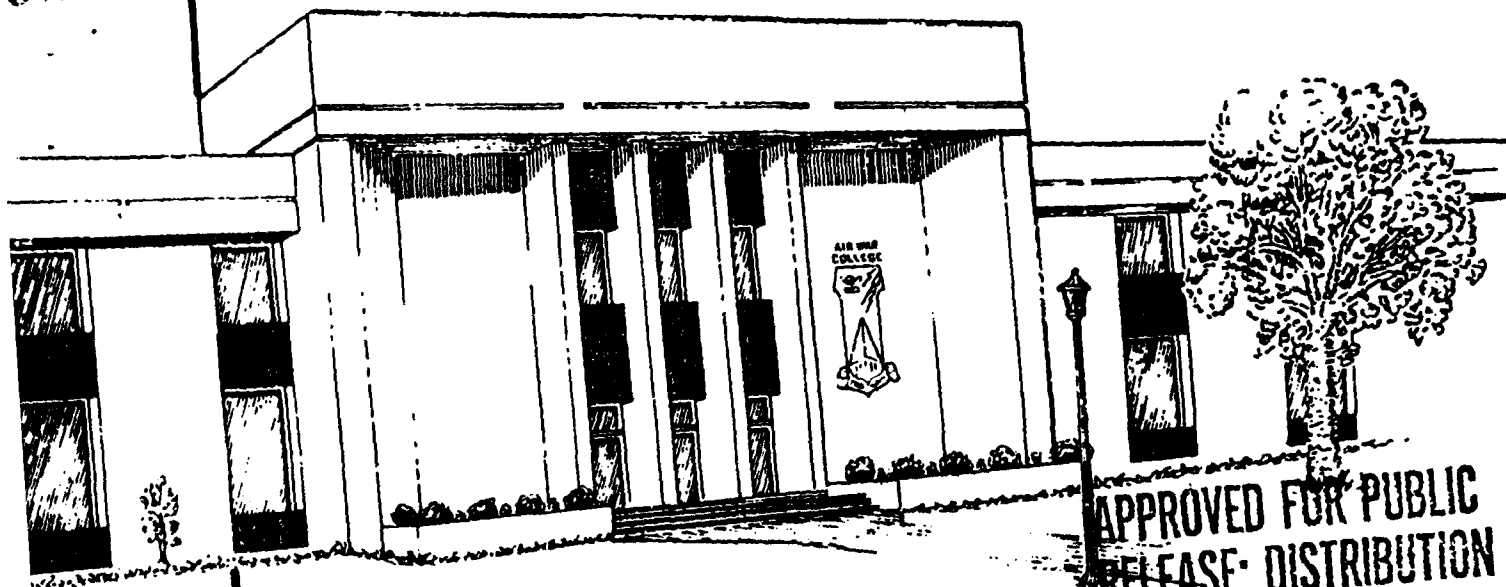
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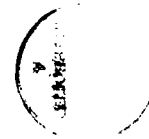
AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ISLAMIC MIDDLE EAST

by

Patrick O. Adams  
Colonel, USAF



A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM  
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Dr. M. E. Ahrari

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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# **ABSTRACT**

**TITLE: Perspectives on the Middle East**

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United States experience in the Middle East has incorporated three considerations: security against Soviet expansionism; a fair and peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict; and free-market access to oil sources. United States attempts to insure influence in the Persian Gulf area, in particular, has been marked by haphazard successes and staggering failures. Successive American administrations have struggled with threats to U.S. vital interests in the region, resulting in the Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, Carter and Regan foreign policy doctrines. Each policy pronouncement incorporated different approaches to similar and recurring problems. All failed to recognize the unique and pervasive religious and societal aspects of Islamic Middle East culture.

The military defeat of Iraq's military by the U.S.-led coalition offers a signal opportunity to redress the unbalanced and uninformed American view of Islam, Arabism and Middle East societal culture.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Patrick O. Adams (M.S., Auburn University) has been interested in Middle Eastern affairs since his tour of duty with ARMISH-MAAG Iran in the the early 1970s. He has traveled in Iran, Turkey, Israel and Greece. A career personnel officer, he has served in various field, major command and Air Staff positions over the course of his career. He is a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College and the Air War College.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

United States experience in the Middle East must be cast against the broader historical perspective of post-World War II policies affecting the region but, more importantly, it must be examined against the characteristics which distinguish Islamic society from the West.

American foreign policy in the Middle East since World War II has incorporated three primary and continuing considerations. First, the United States has pursued security against Soviet threats to the Persian Gulf's integrity and independence. Second, it has sought fair and peaceful means to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Third, America has championed access to oil for itself and the industrialized democracies. With the exception of U.S. actions to regain the sovereignty of Kuwait, and to a lesser extent Lebanon, American actions have not included recognition of the needs or aspirations of the regional states.

Major American foreign policy formulations--the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957--had the Middle East as a primary focus and clear objective. The Nixon Doctrine of 1970, while largely shaped by domestic reactions to the Vietnam conflict, affected the Middle East as well.

(111:201-202) Broadly, these presidential pronouncements expressed a policy of containing "international communism" while

incorporating differing methods to accomplish their goals.

The Truman Doctrine aimed at safeguarding Greece and Turkey, and later Iran by extension, through economic aid and military assistance. The Eisenhower Doctrine recognized the Arab world's instability (particularly with regard to Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq) and pledged direct employment of U.S. military power. The Nixon Doctrine limited direct military intervention but promised other forms of assistance, including an adequate supply of modern weapons to friendly nations which would assume greater shares of self-defense and regional influence. (86:796-797; 111:204) The Shah's Iran was the centerpiece of the Nixon Administration policy.

Few events since World War II have been as abruptly staggering to American long term policy goals as the Shah's fall from power. Only the political debate over the loss of China and the much longer introspection of the Vietnam War eclipse the specter of America's Persian Gulf policy reversal. The Shah's departure on January 16, 1979 ended United States hopes for Persian Gulf stability based on the twin pillars of Iran's military power and the House of Saud's moderate Arab leadership and wealth.

In the aftermath, America faced the shambles of its policy assumptions, the unquestioned loss of national prestige, the bitter hostility of the emerging Islamic Republic of Iran and, later, an initially hollow promise of military intervention to preserve regional order and unimpeded access to the principal



source of oil for the free world.

In the 1980 Carter Doctrine the United States expressed its willingness to take military action against any outside force seeking to gain control of the Gulf....After absorbing a sizeable erosion in its strategic position caused by the ouster of the shah, the United States tried to save the remainder of this position--and retain its credibility in the Gulf--through the use of military might. Carter backed up his doctrine with the creation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, later expanded into the U.S. Central Command, forces explicitly designed and deployed to defend the Gulf. (2:161)

In August, 1990, President Bush dispatched U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf in the first significant deployment of American power envisioned by the Carter Doctrine. The domestic euphoria surrounding the U.S.-led coalition's denial of the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait, however, masks deeper issues confronting American presence in the Persian Gulf region. Fundamentally, there exists a disregard or ignorance of the very real cultural differences vis-a-vis the West. The Islamic Middle East, frustrated by foreign domination and Western disdain, seeks simple recognition of its heritage, historical power and traditional culture from a world prepossessed by the rapid changes wrought by modernization and technology. The conflict between two distinct societal perspectives--the regard, if not reverence, for the past by Moslems; and the fascination by the West with the future--guarantees a political schism which has frustrated U.S. policy-makers for half a century. This paper will explore Middle Eastern politics, the fall of the Shah, characteristics of Saddam's Iraq, and offer a perspective for post-Desert Storm U.S. policy formulation.

## CHAPTER II

### MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL MODELS

#### The Influence of Islam

Any examination of Middle Eastern politics (excepting Israel and, to a degree, Lebanon and Turkey) must begin and end with the central and pervading influence of Islam. First, Islam is both the youngest of the three great revealed religions and, surprisingly, the least complicated. To be a Muslim, one must profess the faith (There is one God, Allah, to the exclusion of all others; Muhammad played the special historical role of the messenger of God and was, therefore, not divine but mortal.). Other than the profession of faith, there are actually few obligations for the faithful. A Muslim ought to contribute to the poor and should make a pilgrimage to Mecca at some time in his life. He should submit to prayer five times daily and during the month of Ramadan, he should fast during daylight. (20:42) Second, unlike Christendom, Islam does not distinguish between the political state and the realm of belief: In Islamic philosophy, there is nothing to 'render unto Caesar'. (20:41)

In pagan Rome, Caesar was God. For Christians, there is a choice between God and Caesar, and endless generations of Christians have been ensnared in that choice. In Islam, there was no such choice. In the universal Islamic polity as conceived by Muslims, there is no Caesar, but only God, who is the sole sovereign and the sole source of law. Muhammad was his Prophet, who during his lifetime both taught and ruled on God's behalf. (87:40)

Third, in the Western media's grossly inadequate attempts to either simply explain, or more fundamentally, understand the clash

of Islam and modernization, most contemporary reporting convinces the viewer or reader that the phenomenon of societal disruption is, in fact, a contemporary problem. The Muslim elite would have no quarrel with this Western assumption--with the fatal distinction between Islamic and Western notions of 'contemporary'.

For the Muslim world, the clash of modernization began with Napoleon in 1798 and the conquest of Egypt. From the Muslim perspective, the challenge of the West has been omnipresent to date. This encroachment by modernism took Islamic religious reform through a lengthy attempt--over two centuries--to answer a simple but crucial question: "How is it that power, skills and material comforts have come to those who reject Islam, the right path to the life of man in God?" (20:49) This question's centrality is highlighted by remembering that Christ was crucified and Moses died without entering the Promised Land. Conversely, Muhammad triumphed during his lifetime and died a conqueror and a sovereign. The beliefs and attitudes of Christians, Jews and Moslems are still profoundly influenced by these facts. (87:41)

The accepted answer to that central question centered on man, who had turned down the wrong path and had gone astray, despite the proper guidance contained in the Holy Quran. The Muslim's loss of power--political power to govern his life and affairs--was, therefore, punishment for leaving the true path of Muhammad the Prophet. The reason for man's departure from the true path was that he had misinterpreted and misunderstood God's word. Further, the "glorious days of Islam," with the remarkable

Muslim advances in martial conquest, art, literature and science, occurred when all Muslim lands and peoples were united under "one Supreme Caliph." (20:49)

The solution, it was reasoned, lay in freedom from foreign dominance or interference, with Islam itself reformed to the demands of the present day conditions. This preoccupation with foreign domination or interference as a primary reason for Arab disunity and failure is a recurrent, if not persistent, theme in Arab politics.

Islam had brought the Arab nation to greatness, but it did not eradicate the Arab's principal defect, which was their great virtue carried to excess, i.e. individualism, egoism, and tribal rivalry. Under these influences, Arab Islamic unity weakened, the desire for wealth gained the upper hand. The caliphs and leading men in their competition with each other stimulated tribal antagonisms and warfare and then, more ominously, began to rely on foreigners. (38:74-75)

In any assessment of Muslim society, one needs to keep in mind that Islam has no formal organization remotely similar to the established Christian denominations. There is no central or symbolic leadership figure analogous to the Pope (although Shi'i ayatollahs could, albeit incorrectly, be so compared). The lack of an organized hierarchy is based essentially on the religious tenet that a Muslim's obligation is to God and not to a church, per se, or individuals who claim to speak for God. (20:45) Thus, the response to secular encroachment or modernization contrary to Islamic philosophy cannot be instantly or centrally generated. Instead, reaction to modernization must build slowly across the fabric of Muslim society before its strength and depth can be seen

or measured.

But, the traditions and traditionalism of Islam have a very clear voice through the leading figures in the Muslim communities, the ulema. Entrance to the ulema is ill-defined and multifaceted, but one constancy has remained: the ulema have imposed and continue to exert considerable influence throughout the Middle East. Aside from the Islamic Iranian state, the well-known examples of the ulema's influence is their objections to the emancipation of women, the liberalization of marriage and divorce laws, and rapid societal change in general.

Throughout Islamic history, the ulema, the clerics, have been the protectors of societal values, of Islamic law, the teachers of children, and so forth (The primary function of the ulema--from a word meaning knowledge--is to uphold and interpret the Holy Law). (87:41) The clerics have also served as a social-welfare function performed by the state in Western societies. (20:46-47) Therefore, the ulema have the societal responsibility to channel or block reform based on their historical role of protecting Islamic society.

A further Western misunderstanding is the Muslim conception of a Islamic state. As noted earlier, there is no distinction between the state and the realm of belief--the Holy Quran contains the principles of eternal truth. Included in the Quran is guidance for regulating the political and social affairs of man. The Quran's guidance, being difficult to interpret in the daily course of life, led to the compilation of the Hadith, or the

Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad's Life. The Hadith, while recognizing that Muhammad was "only a man," also stipulates that his life was exemplary and furnishes a guide for the faithful to follow. (20:40-41) Because the Hadith guides man's individual conduct, a second body of guidance became law based on guidance from the Quran. Islamic law, or the sharia, reinforced some precepts of pre-Islamic Arab society and added what the West would term family and interpersonal law: circumstances of marriage and divorce; legitimation and custody of children; and the rules of inheritance. Criminal offenses were largely confined to six specific acts: illicit sexual relations, slanderous allegations of unchastity, theft, wine-drinking, armed robbery, and apostasy. (20:43)

Religion becomes so tightly entwined with everyday Middle Eastern life that the practicing Muslim is immersed in the obligations of a legal system that is the only conceivable one in Islam. Therefore, the prevailing Western assumption that an Islamic state must be arch-reactionary is the polar extreme from the Muslim view: the sharia is less the obligations of a Muslim's religion, per se, but the proper and logical legal system in a society that essentially draws no distinctions between religious and secular acts and obligations. (20:51,42,40)

In the first extant Muslim account of the British House of Commons, written by a visitor who went to England at the end of the 18th century, the writer expresses his astonishment at the fate of a people who, unlike the Muslims, did not have a divinely revealed law and were therefore reduced to the pitiable expedient of enacting their own laws. (87:50)

Finally, within the framework of Islamic ideology there is less emphasis on differentiation and separation and more on unity. The absolute unity of God, the unity of the community of believers, the unity of life as a totality, and the unity of the temporal and the spiritual are all guiding Islamic principles. Historically, a cardinal principle of the unity of the community of believers to preserve its integrity led to rejection and suppression of religious schism within the Muslim community.

Because Islam does not divide corporate functions between 'Caesar and God', the Islamic state serves man's spiritual and worldly needs. Likewise, Islam does not split the community of believers into civil and military entities but requires Muslims to stand together in defense of the community-at-large against the non-Muslim domains. For this reason, the jihad, or holy war, becomes an Islamic ideal representing the ultimate sacrifice in the path of God in which every able-bodied Muslim should partake. (44:90)

#### The Challenge of Modernization

The impact of modernization on political development in the context of Middle Eastern societies is a central focus in many examinations of the region. While the terms 'modernization' and 'political development' are often used synonymously, James Bill and Carl Leiden in Politics in the Middle East consider the two as interrelated by analytically distinct processes.

Modernization--"inevitable and omnipresent"--is the product of increasingly global interdependence. (20:5) Modernization is

the "process by which man increasingly gains control over his environment." (20:3) Bill and Leiden's thesis is that modernization--a "universal social solvent"--requires all societies to struggle to control their environments: not all will succeed to the same degree. The resulting uneven patterns of successful modernization become manifest as a source of tension and conflict in society's political development. (20:5) The forces of opposition which toppled the Shah of Iran serve as a graphic example.

#### The Concept of Political Development

Political development permits a political system to acquire the capacity to meet and absorb changing demands while assuring its own continuity. Political development is also the capacity to innovate and manage continuous change. (20:7) While the capacity to generate and absorb persistent transformation varies from society to society, fundamentally transforming basic power configurations have been the rarest type of political change, a factor usually reflecting resistant and resilient traditions. It is clear that economic processes are more easily transformed and the social systems which support a society can also be altered, but political development normally changes very slowly--and, in the Middle East, it lags conspicuously. (20:26)

A compounding dilemma for Islamic society lies in the desire of large groups--if not entire nations--to seek technologies available in the non-Muslim (read Western) societies. The exploitation of natural resources has spurred economic and social



modernization in the Middle East: economic and social growth, in turn, has significantly increased the capacity to generate political change. This is most clearly seen through state-sponsored advancements in the related fields of education and technology, and the resultant burgeoning growth of indigenous professional middle classes who are among the loudest voices advocating political change and reform. By ignoring or failing to address these demand, political elites reinforce their unwillingness "to meet and absorb changing demands while assuring [their] own continuity." (20:7) It becomes "...a situation in which expanding gaps, like bubbles, burst into one another....[and the]...gap between socioeconomic modernization and political development is increased by the capacity to generate transformation and the failure to absorb it." (20:26)

#### Categories of Political Development

Middle Eastern societies fall into four categories of political development: democratic-populist, traditional-authoritarian, traditional-distributive, and authoritarian-distributive. (20:30-33)

The democratic-populist model stresses liberal democratic values and incorporates relatively open participation through parties, parliaments and elections. In recent years, systems of this category throughout the world have been retreating; in the Middle East only Israel, Turkey, and, notionally, Lebanon remain democratic-populist systems.

Emphasis on the maintenance of order and economic growth

characterize the traditional-authoritarian system, with a concomitant overwhelming obsession for security of the ruling house. Political participation is fragile--if permitted--and all significant decision making is monopolized by the ruling elite. The monarchies of Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Iran's Pahlavi rule are examples. As discussed later in this paper:

[the] Iranian revolution was a reaction to excessive signs of Westernization under the Shah. But it was also a reaction among upwardly mobile young men and women to what they rightly or wrongly perceived as inequities not only of wealth and privilege but also of access to jobs, housing, and education. (13:58)

The traditional-distributive model describes Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, where traditional monarchical regimes differ from their traditional-authoritarian cousins by the ruling elites' determination to distribute oil wealth through their respective populations. In these systems, the urge or perceived need for greater political participation is far more subdued because of the oil wealth-supported standards of living: "Citizens of Abu Dhabi are provided everything from free schooling and health care to free housing; ...[Kuwaiti] citizens enjoy a welfare system unequalled anywhere." (20:32)

The last category--authoritarian-distributive--is the most recent type of political development in the Middle East with authoritarian leadership committed to the mobilization of the mass public. Authoritarian-distributive systems follow the overthrow of a traditional-authoritarian system and have resulted in two subcategories of systems: the radical modernizing and the Islamic model. The major difference between the traditional-authoritarian

and authoritarian-distributive models lies in the area of distribution, with the latter system more committed to political participation and social/economic development. The radical modernizing variant has leadership seeking rapid modernization and a broad distribution of modernizing benefits to the population at large. What also invariably happens is the gap between modernization and political development, in fact, increases as the decreasing governing elites concentrate more and more political power in their shrinking circles. Examples of radical modernizing states are Qaddafi in Libya, Saddam Husain's Iraq, Hafez al-Assad in Syria, and Mubarak in Egypt.

The extreme Islamic variant is represented by post-revolutionary Iran, with authoritarian control at the center. The significance of Islamic Iran in this context is the conscious and successful effort to slow modernization, which, in turn, has narrowed the gap between modernization and political development. This aspect--the dampening of conflict between modernization and political development--may be appealing to the masses and ulema of other societies facing Islamic revival and resurgence, but it is unlikely that nearby Islamic societies will copy the Iranian revolution.

The basic themes of the 1978-79 revolution and the patterns of the religious-radical alliance, the partnership of mosque and bazaar, were particular to Iran, a society known both for its long periods of submission to despotism and its recurrent rebellions. These large themes found no echo in the Arab realms nearby. The states of the Gulf were too small, their politics confined to the competition of clan, family and faction. Temperamentally, Iran has been a land susceptible to the power of ideas, to political and philosophical abstraction, to the pamphleteer. It has been

called a 'hotbed of philosophical systems'. The Arab culture nearby, that of the Gulf states, has in contrast always been thoroughly empirical, bearing the imprint of the desert, where men, if they are to survive, must be able to discern between a mirage and the real thing. (3:139)

### The Development Struggle

The challenge of development brings forth four additional factors characteristic of Middle Eastern societies. First, there are no middle or end points in modernization; it is a continuous, almost seamless process. Second, no particular category of political development--democratic-populist, traditional-authoritarian, etc.--ensures success: failures, such as the fall of the Iranian monarchy, are evident in all categories. Third, cultural and historical influences require a close relationship between political development and Islam (or, Judaism in Israel).

Fourth, political development in any particular state is complicated by interregional and international factors: international energy supplies, superpower competition and the Arab-Israeli conflict impose enormously difficult external considerations. (20:33-35)

Finally, the development struggle must face the influence of Islam. The most important feature of resurgent Islam is its populist nature: it is a movement generated primarily from below, from the grass roots, the underside of society. It sweeps upward and outward and is a movement of the angry, the alienated, the deprived, and the dispossessed. (21:130)

Four themes capture the general mood of Islamic revivalism: disenchantment with and rejection of the West; disillusion with the political and socioeconomic realities of Muslim

life; a quest for identity and authenticity--an attempt to root the development of Muslim society in indigenous cultural values; and the reassertion of Islam as an alternative ideology for state and society. (43:53)

Because of its reverse focus--its seemingly counter-logic from a Western perspective--Islam is often more effective as an ideology of political opposition than as an ideology of political rule. The future of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its large and growing population and a petroleum-based economy, is tied to the industrialized West by the practical necessities of essential technologies and market economies. The ayatollahs will ultimately face the mirror-image pressures they brought to bear so effectively against the Shah.

## CHAPTER III

### POWER RELATIONSHIPS: FAMILIES, CLASSES AND PATRIMONIALISM

#### Families and Kinship Groups

The dominant structure of Islamic society has been the informal group. Family groupings form the basic unit, with marriage patterns often the subject of careful thought with regard to a benefit to the extended family: "The most preferred marriage is a man to his father's brother's daughter...[which] was designed to strengthen important blood ties and to solidify a constantly expanding family unit." (20:90-91) Arranging marriages, therefore, is serious business because the family can be broadened into kinship with new individuals and other families. And, this kinship concept--of belonging or closeness to strength or historical importance--also explains the "elaborate arguments that purport to document one's direct descent from the family of the Prophet Muhammad." (20:92) Kinship groupings are a united front against the pressure of rival forces and, thus, explain the nuclear family's central role as the most cohesive and tenacious of the Middle East groupings. (20:93)

Examples of the importance of kinship abound in the Middle East. Monarchial Iran was often called the "country of one thousand families" while Morocco was the "kingdom of cousins." (20:94) From 1928 to 1958, Iraq was dominated by a tight cluster of families--the al-Saids, al-Askaris, the Kannas, and the Kamals.

Nuri al-Said was the prime minister 14 times and a central government minister on 29 occasions. Ja'far al-Askari was prime minister twice and a minister eight times; Nuri al-Said and Ja'far al-Askari married each other's sister. And, the revolution of 1958 and 1968 changed little of the kinship importance in Iraq, despite the socially egalitarian rhetoric of the Ba'th Party prior to and following its attainment of political power. The current regime of Saddam Husain is clearly and forcefully dominated by Husain and his relatives from the town of Takriti. Saddam is the foster son, nephew and son-in-law of Khayrallah al-Tulfah, a governor of Baghdad. His two half-brothers served as his intelligence and security chiefs in the early 1980s. Minister of Defense Adnan Khayrallah al-Tufah is the son of Khayrallah and the cousin and brother-in-law of Saddam.

In the words of a leading scholar of Iraqi politics, the Takritis' power is so great that it would not be going too far to say that the Takritis rule through the Ba'th Party, rather than the Ba'th Party through the Takritis. (20:96)

Family and kinship groups are joined by larger formations. Most group formations in the Middle East are informal, noncorporate, unofficially organized "collectivities" that articulate their interests in highly personalized manners. Group organizations centers on particular individuals and kinship structures which emerge as cliques, factions or coteries. (20:76-77) The informal group is basically nonideological, with commitments more common to individuals and family units. (20:87) Thus, Middle Easter social and political ties, largely devoid of ideological commitment, are highly personal in nature. In this

environment, personal persuasion becomes the preferred and respected political tool. (20:86-87)

### Social Class Structure

Although throughout Islamic history a person's occupation has been closely intertwined with personal power position, more broadly class conflict has been very rare: class structure and cohesion are weak, loyalty to family supersedes class, group structure often includes multiclass membership, and the group structure offers upward and downward mobility. (20:128) The groupings--ethnic, tribal, religious and military, for example--often draw membership from several, but not all, classes of society.

The traditional Middle Eastern Islamic class structure included seven strata of society: the upper (ruling) class, a bureaucratic middle class, the bourgeois middle class, the cleric middle class, the traditional working class, the peasant class and the nomadic class. Aggregated together, this model has one upper, three middle and three lower classes which permits the designation of upper, middle and lower to correspond to general power categories and the more specific labels referring to both power and employment. While urbanization, industrialization and land reform has softened some aspects of class stratification, the distinctions of each class remain important in power relationships. (20:116,121-122,128)

- upper class -- representing a tiny percentage of the population (usually less than 2 percent), the upper class ruled



society because it possessed a monopoly of power and authority. This group is composed of the elites of governmental administration, landholders, the ulema, large tribes, the military and major business enterprises. Class size remains very small because a single member often holds multiple power functions similar to interlocking corporate boards of directors: a member of the ruling family is also a military leader and a major landlord. Ruling classes in contemporary Islamic societies are also shaped by kinship lines which serve as power conduits that originate at the person of the ruler and his family. "By virtue of its advantageous power position, ...[the]...ruling class directs the political system of society." (20:118)

- bureaucratic middle class -- as the most powerful of the middle classes, the administrators form a concentric ring around the ruling class because of its many points of contact with the elite and the often mutually held interests. The administrators translate the upper class directives into action. By its proximity to power, the bureaucratic middle class holds the possibility of movement into the upper class. (20:118-119)

- bourgeois middle class -- the businessmen, merchants and traders occupy the middle ground in the middle class. Unlike individuals in the upper class and bureaucratic middle class, the individual bourgeois class member has little economic power and virtually no political influence: as a class, however, the bourgeois has considerable potential political power. The bazaars and suqs of the Middle East are traditional meeting places for the

merchant, artisan, worker and cleric. The bourgeois institutionalized their internal interrelationships in guilds and brotherhoods with an overlay of rules and beliefs that almost resembles ideology. With a strong sense of class, purpose and local concentration in the cities and villages, the bourgeois was often the barometer for society's political mood. Historically, bourgeois class power has been the spawning ground for opposition movements. (20:119)

- cleric middle class -- the lower and middle rungs of the ulema possess no political influence remotely similar to the bureaucrats nor the wealth of the business community. Instead, they hold very important religio-psychological influence over practicing Muslims as well as children who they teach basic educational skills. Clerics have traditionally exercised influence over the lower classes in their social welfare role and thus identify more closely with the lower strata.

- working class -- servants, laborers, craftsmen and artisans, men who work with their hands are largely scorned by the classes above them (except the clerics). Because the working class tends to be urban, they have often formed or joined guilds and brotherhoods which, in turn, has provided them the best power position among the lower classes. (20:121)

- nomadic lower class -- this is essentially the tribal mass which is subjugated to the khans or tribal leaders. Only their natural and traditional freedom of movement and their occasional importance as a armed force distinguishes them from peasants in

the power structure. (20:121)

- peasant class -- at the very bottom of society, the peasant is open to exploitation by all other classes. Comprising the largest class group, the peasant also represents the majority of the lower classes. In predominately agricultural societies, these are the individuals who work the land under a variety of arrangements that only alter the degree of their poverty, dependence, disease, and ignorance. (20:121)

The three middle classes deserve additional comment. Their memberships are largely products of the same education system, directed by the ulema, which stressed reading, writing, rhetoric, religious law and the Quran. With rote-memorization the typical educational method, the middle classes have very similar values and a conservative outlook.

It is very rare to find a classroom in which dialectical or inquiry-probing teaching is taking place -- teaching that affords students the opportunity to express their own positions on issues and search for evidence to back their positions. In other words, the Arab classroom, as is still the case in many European classrooms, is not conducive to problem solving. The student, in general, is treated as 'a passive recipient' and teaching 'is predominately informational, with memorization playing a large role. (93:109)

The middle classes have historically supported the ruling elite, unless there occurred a severe business disruption or a series of policies by the rulers that contradicted the tenets of Islam; usually both conditions had to occur simultaneously for the middle classes to actively oppose central authority. Even then, the bureaucratic middle class seldom participates in the opposition activities. (20:120)

Although not included in the traditional class structure model, there is an additional class of rising importance in the contemporary Middle East. This group can be best visualized as indigenous replacements for Western expertise. The professional middle class, composed of white collar workers who pursue technical, professional and administrative occupations, derive their power from skill obtained through an advanced Western education. While not a intellectual class per se, it may be termed an intelligentsia because it encompasses the intellectual elite of Middle Eastern society. But unlike the educated members of the ruling elite who hold both wealth and political authority, and unlike the members of the traditional middle classes who are schooled through an education system dominated by the clerics, the new professional middle class derives influence from its essentiality to a nation's industrial, petroleum and technical enterprises. The economic growth and modernization insures continued growth of this class in medical, engineering, high technology, higher education and military occupations.

(20:122-124)

The significance of the professional middle class is its emerging threat to the traditional sociopolitical system. The old network of personalism, favoritism, nepotism and influence peddling shortchanges the skills, work and aspirations of the new professionals. This entire class is an agent of modernization and it increasingly demands a share of political authority. The success of the professionals in effecting change, however, has

been limited, because it, too, is torn by internal divisions and it has not built a persuasive appeal to overcome the extraordinary societal strength of the traditional political system. The professionals, with a Western education, multilingual speech, and secular perspective and beliefs, is separated from the lower classes (and, indeed, in many respects from the traditional middle classes) by an enormous social and cultural gulf: the new professional represents the antithesis of the illiterate or poorly educated, suspicious and deeply religious bulk of Middle Eastern society. (20:124-127)

#### Patrimonial Leadership

Despite the many differences between various leaders and ruling elites, Muslim leadership holds a number of deep and persistent similarities which can be traced to the Prophet Muhammad. (20:74, 132-133)

Historically, great Muslim leaders had been military conquerors, combining both military and civilian authority in their person. The prophet Mohammad himself led Muslim troops in battle, so did the early caliphs. They bore the responsibility of being ameer al-mou'mineen (commander of the faithful or believers), a title which asserted the unity of the civil and military functions in the office of the ruler. Indeed, contrary to Christianity, in the Islamic state religious, political, and military institutions have developed simultaneously, with a single personage exercising supreme power in all three spheres. Thus, successive Muslim rulers held the religious, administrative, and military leadership of the community. (44:90)

The central point in examining the traditional processes of leadership is the basic relationship between the ruler and ruled that bind the two together. The key is that the binding human relations between ruler and ruled were shaped in a patriarchal

environment but routinized in a patrimonial system: essentially, patrimonial rule represents an expansion of the patriarchal system. The definition of patrimonial rule is "an extension of the ruler's household in which the relation between the ruler and his officials remains on the basis of paternal authority and filial dependence." (20:149)

Patrimonial leadership has been the dominant pattern in Islamic societies. An essential element of Islamic patrimonial rule is the concept of emanation, which means one treats the other solely as an extension of one's self. The subordinate in the relationship accepts the denial of his own separate identity because of the overwhelming power of the source of the emanation: the person who yields is rewarded with total security. (20:149-150)

In a patrimonial setting, the sovereign is at the center of the political system, surrounded by an inner circle characterized by their unquestioned personal loyalty to the leader. The circle of advisors relate submissively and passively to the leader but not to their own peers and subordinates. Therefore, the vertical relationships are one-sided and horizontal patterns are characterized by rivalry, with those of equal power being locked in constant conflict. Thus, traditional politics in a patrimonial system will normally consist of vertical emanation and horizontal competition. (20:148-151)

The fundamental source of power in patrimonial politics is a military that is at the personal disposal of the leader. While

promoting rivalry and tension within the political system, the patrimonial leader must also guard against having the balanced rivalry of his subordinates become unbalanced with the rivals united against him. Only the most trusted relatives and confidants will be appointed to military leadership positions. The patrimonial leader will reinforce over and over the fact that military force is his personal instrument and will attempt to control the military through emanation of military officers. The military coups that have marked Middle Eastern politics represent the failure of leaders and ruler to establish and maintain viable patrimonial patterns. (20:169-172)

Middle Eastern societies have been governed by authoritarian patrimonial systems throughout history. The Prophet Muhammad, as the prototype leader, was the embodiment of emanation because he was the mirror who reflected the word of God. With the entire philosophical framework of Islam stressing relationships of emanation (the word "Islam" means submission), Muslim societies would see patrimonial rule as the unquestioned natural order. As the normal system, then, it is understandable why the leader becomes the publicized source of all ideas, policies, strategies and programs. The community literally wraps itself around the leader, who then governs through a constantly expanding web of personal relationships. (20:149-157) Saddam's Iraq is a contemporary example.

Leadership in the Middle East has historically operated as the center of webs of personal relationships, with changing lines

of power and authority: there is constant doubt regarding who is closest to the leader and who influenced what decision. This informal environment has advantages for the patrimonial leader because it assures great flexibility and makes opposition very difficult. As illustrated in the discussion that follows, both the Shah and Saddam incorporated this aspect of patrimonialism in their regimes to insure their personal centrality and to "coup proof" their authority from potential usurpers.

With the horizontal relationships being an institutionalized form of rivalry, it is easy to understand the Western view that Islamic societal politics consist of a hopeless mass of interpersonal, intergroup and interclass conflict. And, more importantly, the vertical and horizontal relationships illustrate the primary reason why unity is the most sought-after and least achieved goal in Islamic history. (20:165-167)

#### Summary

In most of the Muslim world, political systems have not provided a base for national unity and political legitimacy. Regardless of the structure of the governing institution, Muslim rulers are often regarded as autocratic heads of corrupt, authoritarian regimes that are propped up by Western governments and multinational corporations. Infatuation with the West is blamed for a general moral and cultural decline--and a loss of identity and values that have led to a breakdown of Muslim society. (43:53-54)

A deep dissatisfaction within Islamic society surfaced at the



conclusion of the first world war with the birth of pan-Arab thought in conjunction with Islamic modernist Arabism.

Pan-Arabists examined Arab history and established several principles. First, the Arab nation (composed of all Arab-speaking people) had developed in their natural homeland--Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Iraq--and expanded outward in a series of waves that achieved greatness. But the nation was locked in unending combat with Aryan imperialism--Persia and the West--which from the Arabic vantage, was motivated by materialistic greed. Islam rescued the Arab nation from the first Aryan intrusion and propelled it to its greatest achievements. The second intrusion, signaled by Napoleon's conquest of Egypt, has not yet been repelled. (38:79)

Radical Arab nationalism resulted from the Palestine War of 1948 and the consequential emergence of the state of Israel. So traumatic to the Arab masses was the loss of Palestine and the "alien cleavage of the Arab homeland" that it fostered a transformation of Arab nationalism.

This transformation shifted the emphasis of Arab nationalism from the glories of the past to the failures--particularly the failure in Palestine--of the present. Palestine symbolized the failure of Arab nationalism to meet the supreme challenge: the challenge of national survival. Liberal Arab nationalism had fed on the euphoria of Arab heritage; such euphoria appeared bankrupt indeed in the reality of Arab ineptitude in Palestine....Under the threat of extinction as symbolized by Palestine, Arab nationalism has reasserted itself, not in the glorification of the past but in the reform of the present. The Palestine defeat sparked the reevaluation of Arab society; and from this has arisen what may be called radical Arab nationalism--a nationalism dedicated to fundamental social change to achieve the objectives of freedom and unity. (64:12-13)

Pan-Arabism gradually was replaced by Islamic modernist

Arabism as the political solution to foreign intrusion or domination. Islamic Arabism determined the only road to greatness and independence is to return to the true Islam of the ancestors, which included a divinely ordained socialism. "The preferred method...[of achieving success]...was the rule of a strong man like Mussolini, who would overthrow the establishment and save the nation...." (38:79)

Islamic fundamentalism swept the Shah from his throne in 1979 and replaced his regime with an Islamic republic. Saddam Hussain rose to power under the guise of secular nationalism and Pan-Arabism and mouths the words of Islamic Arabism in an effort to be the Arab Mussolini. The following chapters examine those events and their respective influences.

## CHAPTER V

### CASE STUDY: THE NIXON DOCTRINE AND THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

#### Introduction

Consistent with the strategy of opposing Soviet expansion through containment, the United States was a principal supplier of weapons for Persian Gulf nations. (106:35) Initially modest in scope and sophistication, arms transfers increased dramatically beginning in 1968 with the British announcement that its forces east of Suez would be withdrawn. (50:304; 108:56-57; 37:52; 84:8)

Simultaneously, additional factors convinced Persian Gulf leaders of their need for improved military capability. First, domestic American opinions evolving from the on-going Vietnam conflict pointed toward a retrenchment of United States foreign policy. (111:202-203) Second, Gulf rulers recognized the increasing strategic importance of the Persian Gulf region and of the heightened threats that would undoubtedly follow. (36:7; 106:36; 60:6-7; 28:1,16; 61:82-84)

The Nixon Doctrine seemed to embody realpolitik, and appeared to reflect United States domestic attitudes, an assessment of threat to American strategic interests, and the need to promote unrestricted international trade and stability in Third World markets. (84:25) First, the real or perceived actions by the Soviets and their proxies in the Middle East, Southwest Asia, and the Indian Ocean littoral dictated the creation of a countervailing force, particularly in the Persian Gulf,

sympathetic to U.S. objectives. (24:258-259) Second, the rising oil profits of petroleum producing nations created a capability within the Persian Gulf to sustain significantly greater arms purchases and to maintain larger military establishments. (50:304; 129:81; 84:9; 46:A12) Third, neither the American public nor the Congress was likely to support any increased overseas military presence. Finally, there was the very real necessity by the West, and the United States in point of fact, to recapture petrodollars from the oil producing states. (26:296; 84:9; 5:52; 106:41) By the early 1970s, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf led the world in arms purchases. (61:84)

Iran was the most visible example of the Nixon Doctrine's application, providing what little encouragement was needed for the Shah to become the Gulf's policeman. (50:304, 314; 118:599-600; 129:149; 140:107-112; 16:A3; 9:327; 50:87; 8:201, 212, 224,230) The Shah's growing military strength, coupled with Saudi oil wealth and Arab leadership, created the twin pillars of support and strength for U.S. Persian Gulf policy.

#### The Imperial Iranian Armed Forces

In 1979 Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shahanshah of Iran, King of Kings, Light of the Aryans and the Shadow of God, was driven from the throne he had held for 37 years. To outside observers and particularly the United States, the Shah's authority and centrality seemed insurmountable in the mid-1970s: he held the essentials of political power, exercised direct command over his military and Iran enjoyed enormous wealth from oil revenues. In

fact, according the political assumptions of the twentieth century, "...an authoritarian system was not supposed to succumb to civilian revolution short of a lost war with foreign powers." (86:803)

At the heart of Iran's modernization efforts lay the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces, men and weapons that was to be the centerpiece of the Shah's dream of an Iranian civilization to equal ancient Persia. As dreams were translated to reality, Iran became the world's leading customer for American arms; Iran accounted for 25 percent of total U.S. foreign military sales between 1970 and 1978. (5:45; 12:12)

From 1950 -1971, Iranian purchases of American arms did not exceed a billion dollars; between 1971 and 1978, Iranian orders for military equipment and training leaped to approximately \$20 billion. (57:98) Indeed, Iran's military expansion was at a pace and on a scale unprecedented for a third world state; with the exception of the superpowers, the Shah's Iran reached the highest defense expenditure of any nation with an armed force under a million men. (8:229)

Iran's large population, economic power and military capability, coupled with the Shah's Gaullist-like conception of Iran's place in history, resulted in regional military superiority by the mid 1970s. (29:628; 108:56-59; 84:420; 134:281, 291) The Shah's military modernization program fell generally into the following categories. Holding its manpower strength fairly constant, the army was transformed from predominantly infantry to

an integrated armor-mechanized infantry force, while the Imperial Iranian Air Force was massively expanded in personnel, equipment, and sophistication to model that of the Israelis'. (84:418; 129:77-80) The Imperial Iranian Navy, charged with deep-water power projection into the Persian and Arabian gulfs, required a truly ambitious expansion. (50:304; 129:78; 28:18-24, 28; 108:76)

The Shah consistently sought America's most advanced and sophisticated weapons. Following the 1973-1974 oil price increases, his military arsenal began "to resemble a Jane's Directory of Modern Weapons." (50:304) This extraordinary military expansion and modernization led to post-Iranian Revolution conclusions that U.S. sales had contributed to the Shah's ultimate downfall principally from the standpoint of imprudent economic choices for a developing nation. Against criticism of the scope of Iran's military expansion it should be understood that the Shah's arms purchases never exceeded \$6 billion a year while annual oil revenues were roughly \$20 billion. The basic problems of overspending and questionable development priorities were essentially separate issues from the level of military spending. (86:812) With \$14 billion remaining for industrial and other domestic programs, Iran was clearly in the fortunate position to afford both guns and butter.

#### Domestic Impact of Arms Purchases

The real domestic impact of Iran's military expansion was not the economic cost of arms. Rather, the acquisition of advanced military equipment generated out-year requirements for thousands

of skilled technicians to repair, maintain, and operate high-technology gear. (12:8; 129:78, 81; 5:45) So large was the trained personnel requirement that a 1976 U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report on American arms sales concluded that Iran would likely be unable to conduct major combat operations for the following 5-10 years without sustained U.S. support. (116:213) In a separate State Department study, the technician requirement was judged so substantial that the Iranian military "might need virtually the country's entire high school graduating class each year." (116:166) William H. Sullivan, United States Ambassador to Iran from 1977-1979, observed that the "most telling complaint against the weapons-acquisition program was that it diverted the best human resources away from social and economic programs and concentrated them on a sterile military purpose." (129:81)

Iran's shortage of technically skilled personnel in the face of rapid military expansion was immense. For example in 1976 the Iranian Air Force had trained 14,000 technicians against a requirement of 20,000. The F-14 program stripped qualified personnel from the marginally experienced F-4 maintenance cadre with predictable detrimental effects on readiness and training. The Iranian Army's helicopter expansion was programmed to rise from 406 aircraft and 8,000 men in the early-1970s to 800 aircraft and 14,000 men by 1978. The Spruance destroyer order was projected to require a pool of 2,000 men; by 1976 only 23 had entered training. Without immediate or foreseen internal

capability to absorb, man, and maintain new weapon systems, the Iranian government recruited foreign technicians in large numbers to provide training and maintain the new weapon systems. (129:149; 60:20, 21; 56:141; 84:9; 116:173) By 1977 there were 24,000 Americans alone employed in Iran on various projects with estimates of 25-35,000 additional foreign technicians to be hired in the next few years. (8:231) This large foreign presence interposed on a developing, but intrinsically traditional society, was the sole adverse impact of U.S. arms sales. That indirect by-product of arms purchases--a large foreign presence--was recast by the opposition in uniquely Persian terms as we will see later.

The Shah's aggressive expansion plans would have challenged an educated, economically healthy and industrialized society. For Iran, these programs became precariously suspended above the economic recession in the late 1970s. The resulting domestic strains imposed by the economy focused the Iranian populace's growing discontent on the Western influence and foreign presence caused by the Shah's modernization programs. But in emotional domestic terms, the Shah's military spending was perceived to have been out of balance and became an increasing source of irritation among the clergy, youth, junior officers, intelligentsia, poor and lower middle classes. (26:295, 298)

Industrialization, modernization, weapon purchases and the military's sheer size withdrew resources, particularly technical, from internal development. (50:304; 129:81; 101:29; 55:6) As industrial and economic modernization programs were implemented in



the early 1970s, large numbers of Iranian peasants left their villages because traditional agricultural products were not competitive with imported commodities and the cities offered higher wages. (50:313; 104:154; 84:10; 47:A18) These "urban newcomers," cut off from the norms of village society, became the alienated and unemployed within urban centers as recession slowed the economy. (69:467; 86:805-806)

The Shah's domestic stability had historically rested on a combination of coercion and consumerism. The Imperial regime had never enjoyed substantial support from all segments of the Iranian population as witnessed by the 1953 nationalism of Mossadegh and the 1963 and 1970 periods of civil unrest, but had maintained its supremacy through economic opportunities for the elite and educated, intimidation, and the thin appeal of the 1963 White Revolution. (138:288-291) By 1976, slumping oil sales and rising costs of imports necessitated reductions in industrial development projects. (119:4; 50:304, 313) With a 50+ percent inflation rate in 1977 and 1978, the expanding middle and urban worker classes saw an erosion of their economic gains. (119:4; 104:156) Austerity measures imposed by the government failed to gain popular support largely because of continued and substantial arms purchases. (46:A12) The combination of inflation, recession, a large foreign presence, and continued military expansion gnawed away at the regime's support. (121:34; 55:6-7; 56:141) By early 1978, however, additional pressures were clearly straining Iranian society and the Shah's various methods of sustaining the

monarchy's preeminence no longer guaranteed success. Beneath the regime's shallow support lay the roots of even greater dissatisfaction; in the mid-1970s, the clear and growing taproot was governmental corruption. (102:A8; 135:A9; 26:289-290; 138:283)

#### Corruption and Arms Purchases

A certain amount of corruption has always been endemic in Iran, reflecting Middle Eastern and Southwest Asian traditional practices of influence peddling and agent services. (124:52; 34:12; 140:100) Following the oil revenue boom of 1974, corruption among civilian and military officials exploded, involving multi-million dollar bribes and "commissions" by British, French, Italian, German, Japanese and American firms to secure Iranian arms and industrial development contracts. (129:67, 81; 16:A3; 57:90; 140:100; 52:280-282; 63:A1, A5) With the industrialized democracies eager to recover petrodollars and the Shah pushing his modernization programs, it is hardly surprising that competing companies found "useful" marketing shortcuts in their haste to capture a piece of the Iranian petrodollar action. (5:53; 50:314)

Corruption "ran wild at the heart of the royal family" and among the highest military officers. (57:91; 121:34; 55:6) The amounts involved--conservatively estimated to have been \$200 million between 1972 and 1975--went far beyond the Middle Eastern traditions of "baksheesh", a modest tip or payment for services rendered. (5:53) For example, Grumman reportedly paid some \$24-28 million in commissions to Iranian officials while negotiating its

\$2 billion sale of F-14 Tomcats. Northrop paid between \$2-10 million to expedite sales of its F-5E lightweight fighters and telecommunications equipment. (5:53; 116:163)

Greed fueled the frenzy of Iranian contracting agents and the governing elite; what was worse, however, was so little effort to hide or disguise the fact that senior officials, military officers, and the royal family were profiting from government contracts. For example, General Mohammad Khatami, Commander of the Air Force and the Shah's brother-in-law, was involved in highly publicized arms acquisitions which netted him millions in commissions. General Hassan Toufanian, Vice Minister of War for Armaments, acquired equal visibility for commissions as one of Iran's principal military procurement officials. (5:53) Admiral Ramzi Attai, Commander of the Navy in the early 1970s, had received more than \$3 million on military contracts. (57:91; 55:6; 86:807)

The results of corruption among senior officers, blatantly obvious in huge, ostentatious homes, imported furnishings and luxury automobiles, became another source of alienation for nationalistic junior military officers. These were the same individuals who, in retrospect, found themselves subordinate to the de facto supervision of foreign advisors and technicians. (34:12; 55:7; 56:141) Similar frustrations were manifest within Iran's emerging technically skilled, their education and training shortchanged by the Shah's perceived preference for Americans. (5:55; 105:12)

Clearly, Iranian weapon acquisition procedures ignored, or condoned such practices by senior military officers. (129:81) Marvin Zonis, a contemporary Middle East analyst, concluded that corruption was used by the Shah to complement other methods of ensuring the loyalty of the military as well as his personal dominance. (140:100) The sudden, visible wealth among senior military officers accompanying the massive arms purchases sowed the seeds for later divisions within the military. (77:14; 86:807)

#### Shi'ite Islam

In the face of widespread and repulsively visible corruption, severe inflation, questionable arms purchases, strained technical resources, and a very large and offensive foreign population, the quality of Iranian life collided with traditional values of Persian culture and Shi'i Islam. (56:141; 129:28, 139-142) In the resulting disintegration of traditional values and village and family cohesiveness, the repression of political dissent, and the growth of gauche materialism; the population at large turned to its traditional source of spiritual strength--Shi'ite Islam.

Shi'ite Islam as a distinct Moslem sect was born in tension and conflict: the political and military defeat of a large Persian army by a smaller Arab force and the resulting death of the first Shi'ite leaders established the schism between the Sunni and Shi'i brethren. From its violent origins, Shi'ism had imbedded the strong concepts of passion, martyrdom, suffering, and quiet rebellion not shared by the majority Sunnis. With the additional notions of justice and leadership, the Shi'ite

tradition most proudly holds forth the right, if not obligation, for believers to challenge unjust or illegitimate secular leaders. The dogmatic Khomeini and his followers could identify with a long procession of Shi'ite ayatollahs who had challenged previous shahs--although none with the activism and forcefulness of Khomeini. (6:57)

#### The Iranian Revolution and United States Foreign Policy

The Iranian majority, guided by their traditional orientation and cultural heritage, ultimately became the manpower for the Shi'ite confrontation with the Shah. The Iranian monarchy lost its legitimacy that lay within the bounds of constitutionalism and Shi'ite Islam; in the end, the crown was solely dependent upon the power and loyalty of the military and internal security forces. (67:64-65; 104:148; 138:292) With the exception of the most senior officers, the military's fabric was weakened and torn by the same dissatisfaction voiced by the opposition. Facing the prospect of large scale confrontation with the public at large, the discipline and cohesiveness of military units disintegrated and the armed forces collapsed in 1979 coincident to the departure of the Shah.

The Shah had been permitted to purchase virtually any U.S. weapon system to fulfill a regional power role envisioned by George Kennan's containment policy of 1949 and its legacy, the Nixon Doctrine of 1970. Implicit in most post-revolution analyses is the presumption that the United States by virtue of its huge stake in arms sales had influence or leverage to slow or change

the Shah's intentions. Because the United States was the primary and continuing source of arms, there became a presumed assumption that opportunities must have existed to force realism and balance into Iranian programs, and upon the regime itself. (34:34; 54:179; 69:468; 5:49-55)

Clearly, the amount of money available for military expenditures during the 1970s, coupled with the Shah's obsession to build a "great civilization," drove the pace of his modernization efforts. Had the United States acted to discourage the level of procurement in the mid-1970s (and it did not), it would have negotiated with the very individuals who had the greatest stake in the status quo and the same individuals with the most to lose if the military expansion slowed or stopped--the Toufanians, the Attais, the hundreds of other lesser known "five percenters". (138:284) Further, the extraordinary ease with which high-level officials enriched themselves insured their eagerness for continued and increasing arms purchases--from the standpoint of personal greed alone. (139:101; 138:283-284) And, fundamentally it must be remembered that beyond the Shah's dream of a "great civilization" was the graphic reality that the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces represented the bedrock of the monarch's autocratic power. With the military absolutely central to the monarchy's rule and the Iranian elite sharing in the benefits of a strong and growing armed forces establishment, large scale and continuing arms purchases were inevitable.

### Summary

A postmortem of the Iranian revolution leads to the conclusion that classic factors--a bifurcated society, extremes in the distribution of wealth, traditional societal beliefs and values challenged by aggressive modernization--set the stage for the Shah's fall. First, there existed no meaningful political participation. (138:288-290) The Shah's legitimacy relied upon his military and security apparatuses. Without meaningful political participation, the Iranian people's discontent could focus only on the Shah's regime and its policies. Second, governmental programs, including arms purchases, were generally pursued without meaningful study or planning. These programs contributed to rampant "stagflation" that most harmed the lower classes (and, therefore, the great majority) of Iranian society. Third, the Shah's industrialization efforts led to the urbanization of large segments of a traditionally oriented population. The resulting concentration of unemployed and politically disaffected marched by the thousands against the monarchy. Finally, in the eyes of the Shi'ite clergy, the Pahlavi dynasty and its modernization goals substituted Western vice and internal corruption for Islam and the Persian heritage. The government's scornful attitude toward the ayatollahs, coupled with the redistribution of Shi'ite land holdings and the reduction of religious subsidies by the central government, assured the mullahs' perception that they were under relentless attack by the Shah's regime. (86:804-808)

The opposition succeeded because it embraced a cause that was as much for the principles embodied by Khomeini as it was against the Imperial Shah. Thus, the Khomeini banner would accommodate a continuum of interests from nationalistic Fedayan-e Khalq Marxists to Shi'ite fundamentalists. (22:10; 103:23-24) Further, the opposition was extremely effective in capturing the population's attention by focusing on the Shah's arms purchases as the primary example of the regime's corruption, the imposition of foreign interests and the very illegitimacy of the monarchy itself. The Shah easily became the corrupt and unjust ruler prevalent in Shi'ite and Persian history who, sustained or dominated by foreign interests, repressed the Iranian people. The symbolism of arms purchases--which so clearly personified the foreign interests in Persian historical terms--became greater than reality in Persian eyes. Therefore, by concentrating on arms purchases from a traditional vantage, the opposition easily cast the United States as the "Great Satan," and the source of corruptive anti-Islamic and anti-Persian influence so visible in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Abadan. (26:295; 62:16)

United States arms sales to Iran and the Shah's resulting regional strength and influence became a textbook example of the Nixon Doctrine's intent and application. American domestic and foreign objectives were mutually served by the Shah's willingness to act as the West's stabilizing power in the Persian Gulf region.

The Shah's apparent acceptance of United States foreign policy goals, however, masked his need for armed force to sustain



his rule. Beneath the impressive lists of modern weapons and a large standing military was the vacuum created by widespread Iranian disdain for the throne and its hollow policies. Arms purchases, together with other modernization programs, offered the ruling elite the continued economic and political power that maintained their social status and assured their shallow loyalty to the monarch.

The opposition effectively identified the United States relationship with the Shah in historically negative Persian and Shi'ite conceptions of corruption, military rule and repression. In the aftermath of the opposition's victory, they pronounced their original revolutionary appeal as fact and branded U.S. arms sales a cause for the old regime's defeat. A closer examination of the facts--and Iranian heritage--underscores the Revolution's cause in clearly economic, religious and historical terms. The notion of U.S. arms sales as a primary causal factor is as unfounded as the xenophobic logic that created the thought in the first place.

The Shah's power fundamentally depended on his military's strength and continued support by the Iranian elite. Arms purchases contributed to both sources of power. Because the throne was sustained by force, the opposition attacked the central basis of strength through a twisted application of Persian history and Shi'ite fervor. In the traditional Shi'ite view, the Shah's dream of building a "great civilization" could only mean more Western influence, corruption and disregard for Islam, while the

Khomeini-led opposition promised justice, leadership, nationalism and Islamic security and stability for society-at-large. Overwhelmingly, the Iranian people chose the latter for distinctly Persian reasons.

The fall of the Shah caused an extraordinary upheaval in the Carter Administration's conduct of foreign policy, highlighted by the internal conflict between Secretary of State Vance and National Security Advisor Brzezinski. Brzezinski thought the United States could control the Iranian domestic crisis; Vance believed the administration should come to terms with the revolution and prepare to deal with whomever replaced the Shah's regime. (81:9) Compounding the events at the time was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which Carter and Vance initially placed in a larger context of Islamic fundamentalism, the Iranian revolution, Western energy dependency and regional rivalries. Brzezinski, however, successfully argued for a forceful challenge to Soviet adventurism and used the multiple crises to implement earlier plans for a new American-led security framework and military presence in the Persian Gulf-Middle East region. (85:255)

Before the Shah's fall, conventional wisdom defined the destabilizing factors in the Middle East to be the specter of Soviet influence and the more concrete appeal of Arab nationalism against the West and traditional-authoritarian/distributive states in the region. The legacy of the Shah's fall and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the Carter Doctrine which was to dissuade the Soviets from any southern expansion, to make clear

the Persian Gulf was of vital interest to the United States, and to warn that the United States would respond with military force against outside aggression. (85:259) What U.S. policy ignored was the reaction by Muslims to a new era of perceived imperialism and foreign interference.

The Carter Doctrine and the follow-on Reagan policies failed to recognize that Islamic fundamentalist revolution emerged as an alternative to Arab nationalism and as a menace to all existing regimes in the region. (117:133) Nowhere was this more clear than in the Iran-Iraq War which pitted the Islamic appeal of Khomeini against the secular nationalism of Saddam Husain.

## CHAPTER VI

### CASE STUDY: COMPREHENDING SADDAM'S IRAQ

#### Contemporary Iraq

Iraq is unique among the Arab oil-producing states because it has ample water, considerable agricultural resources, a relatively large population and very substantial petroleum reserves. From tribal and feudal times, through the Ottoman Empire and the British mandated rule, the subsequent British-imposed Hashimite monarchy and, then, the succession of increasingly nationalistic regimes culminating with the present Ba'th Party control, the nature of the ruling elite has remained constant notwithstanding changing outward characteristics of the central government: "political power was the prerogative of a relatively small group of individuals who maneuvered in cliques to attain [and maintain] power." (100:4)

After four centuries of dominance by the Ottoman Empire, the nation of Iraq was created from British management of the League of Nations mandate in 1920. The subsequent search by its numerous leaders for a cultural and national identity capable of "knitting together its various ethnic and religious groups within the context of the broader Arab world" left a legacy that continues to the present. (92:xiii) The economic and social development processes which began at the end of the 19th century reached accelerating and extraordinary proportions since the mid-1970s.

The early 1920s, which brought the creation of the state [of Iraq] and its instrumentalities, also marked the beginnings of strident opposition to foreign control. Nationalist opposition was to dominate the political scene

right up to the revolution of 1958. (92:43)

### The Iraqi Ba'th Party

Central to any examination of contemporary Iraq is the Ba'th Party and its principles. "Others preached radical ideologies which sought basic [social] changes...[but] only the Arab Socialist Party (the Ba'th) seems to excite young Arabs more than other radical groups, because it sought to harmonize the Arab heritage with modern social and economic doctrine considered necessary to modernize Arab society." (76:3)

The Ba'th movement, founded in 1944 by three French-educated Syrian intellectuals, was originally a national liberation movement opposing the French and partly because the founders found fault with the older generation of Syrian nationalists. But the intent to expand the Ba'th into a mass political party dates from the end of World War II and specifically from the defeat of the Arab armies in Palestine, for which the older Arab politicians were widely regarded as being responsible.

Many of the Iraqi intelligentsia of the post-World War II era were zealous pan-Arabists, some dreaming of an Arab Caliph canvassing unity in secular terms and on a wider front than the Fertile Crescent. Many regarded the unification of Germany under Bismark as an 'inspiring model', with Iraq as the Prussia of the Arab world. (100:11)

The essence of the Ba'th is a blending of socialism with Arab nationalism to create "...one Arab nation with an eternal message." (76:32) In Ba'thist thought, Iraq was only a portion of the Arab homeland and its people a part of the Arab nation, reflecting the pan-Arab thought of the 1940s and 1950s. The

country's natural resources and instruments of production were to be owned collectively by the nation; the state would then undertake to exploit them for the benefit of society-at-large. The ultimate form of government following the maturation of the revolution, would be a democratic and socialist state based upon the Ba'th principles where the "...individual would be able to develop his personality, cultivate the Arab heritage, and live in freedom unfettered by social and economic differentials." (76:32) This socialist concept explains, in part, the internal Arab conflict between the oil producing "haves" and the non-oil producing "have nots."

What is often difficult to comprehend from the Western liberal view is the Arab nationalist concept of democracy. Genuine democracy in the Arab world is not individual freedoms protected by traditional parliamentary structures. Rather, democracy is found in social and economic liberation, which provides a basis for true political equality. In order to establish social and economic justice it is first essential to reform the social order and then build a revolutionary economy. In order to accomplish these goals quickly, Arab nationalists argued for the creation of a single-party regime and the state becomes the repository of total power. (123:83)

Ba'thism is essentially a secular political framework in which Islam was the prime 'moment' of Arabism in which Christians and Muslims alike should take pride. "In common with other nationalist ideologies, Ba'thism is vague, romantic and

mystical, and makes constant reference to an idealized vision of the past." (127:88)

#### Iraqi Governmental Structure

The current Iraq regime is organized on the lines of Ba'thist principles. There are four branches of Iraqi government, pending a unification of the Arab nation. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the supreme authority in Iraq, exercises both legislative and executive powers (A unified Arab nation led by the Ba'th would be headed by a National Command Council; therefore the governing body in Iraq maintains the nomenclature that would exist after unification). (76:35-36) The RCC elects the President from its membership; RCC members cannot be arrested nor brought to trial except by the RCC itself. A National Assembly composed of regional delegates, meets twice each year to deliberate legislation to be enacted by the RCC. The President is the chief executive and the commander in chief of the armed forces; he makes all appointments to the cabinet and appoints all judges. The judiciary is designed to operate separately from the other branches and is considered immune from political influence. However, a Revolutionary Court operates outside of the normal judiciary to deal with cases directly connected with the security of the regime. Its actions are extra-constitutional in nature. (76:35-45)

Majid Khadduri's Socialist Iraq attempts to make clear the relationship between the Ba'th Party and the state, and here it begins to get murky. The state is intended to be only one

instrument among several the Ba'th will use to achieve its goals. The Party is to perform as a 'midwife' or link between the state and the people: the Party is the agency capable of providing the leadership and direction necessary for the state to serve the people. Somewhat echoing the rationale for a separate Revolutionary Court, the Ba'th operates a single party political system on the grounds that society is not yet socialist and democratic; upon achieving those goals would a multiple party system be permitted. Further, the Ba'th Party has established in each governmental department--including the Army--a unit of Ba'th members working in that government agency who are held responsible by the Party for the success or failure of anything the agency is performs.

A more specific vision of the future was embodied in the Party's constitution, although it is full of contradictions. For example, article 26 says the Arab Ba'th is a socialist party which believes that the economic wealth of the fatherland belongs to the nation. But article 34 says property and inheritance are two natural rights which are protected within the limits of the national interest. The Ba'th is anti-imperialist, advocates land reform and free social, educational and medical services. The Ba'th version of socialism is essentially non-Marxist or even anti-Marxist in the sense that it stresses the primacy of national/ethnic identity and rejects the notion of antagonistic social classes: once the Arabs are liberated and united, class conflict will melt away. This belief was generally accompanied by a similar conviction that development and modernization would come about as a result of national liberation and unity, and that the Arabs would then be able to recapture their former glory. (127:89)

#### Iraqi Leadership

The Ba'th regime, according to openly sympathetic Khadduri, is organized on the principle of collective leadership and is



"...opposed to the personality cult. No single person should be entrusted with supreme leadership." (76:47) Whether or not the originators of Ba'th principles initially conceived of collective leadership, the Ba'th in power carefully invoked the notion of collective leadership to assert civilian control over the military who had led the revolution in 1968. But, in the early years of revolutionary rule, collective leadership "...did not provide the Ba'th Party the support of a public yearning for a strong leader." (76:49)

Khadduri, an Iraqi who became a naturalized U.S. citizen at age 37, offers an extremely interesting explanation of Arab expectations of leadership. In his view, Arab leadership fails either because their ideas or programs were not relevant to "Arab conditions" or the individual leader lacked leadership qualities. In order to succeed, the Arab leader must possess qualities relevant to Arab society. Because Arabs naturally want a strong leader to "preside" over their destiny, they will support the individual who has integrity, strength of character and "straightforwardness." (76:46)

Whether or not you agree with Khadduri's explanation of the Arab 'yearning' for a strong leader or his assertion that the confluence of man and events produces the catalyst for renewed Arab greatness, it is clear that at the time he wrote Socialist Iraq, the model for his ideal leader was Saddam Husain, who:

...quietly worked up his way in the party's echelons, proved capable of surrounding himself with a number of young men who gave him almost unlimited support to rise to the highest position in the state. Championing the cause

of civilian leadership, he was able to mobilize the growing civilian power against military ascendancy. After the battle was won he relied partly on his young proteges and partly on his personal friendship with President Bakr to maintain his grip over the party. (76:63)

Consider the Slugletts' characterization of Ba'th leadership in Iraq Since 1958 in counterpoint:

It was not the Iraqi Ba'th's policy to gain power by means of elections or through the appeal of its programs; on the contrary it relied on the use of force and the coup d'etat, using its loose organizational structure and its efficiently organized and committed conspiratorial groups to make direct bids for power. These groups consisted largely of gangs of thugs, the most well-know were those associated with al-Sa'di or Saddam Husain. Given the nature of the Party's activities in Iraq, and the irrelevance and vagueness of its 'ideology', it is clear that it did not come to power in 1963 with any specific program beyond that of establishing itself at the expense of its principal opponents. (127:91-92)

Under the regime of al-Bakr, Saddam was building a security apparatus as well as the Party's internal cohesion. At the same time, al-Bakr and Saddam were also 'Ba'thizing' the armed forces, installing what amounted to political commissars at all levels. These individuals were part of a chain of command that bypassed the military authority and led to Saddam. The close ties between al-Bakr and Saddam, together with Husain's shrewdness and utter ruthlessness presumably accounts for his rise from relative obscurity in 1966 to the second most important position in the state apparatus only three years later. At that point Saddam controlled the National Security Bureau of the RCC, the President's personal security apparatus, and the 'official' security service as well as the Ba'th militia, the National Guard. (127:120-121)

#### Summary

As the Ba'th consolidated its power in Iraq in the 1970s, the original call to liberate the Arab people was gradually replaced by an Iraqi-centered nationalism. In 1975, Saddam began referring to the need for a balance between Iraq's interests and those of a united Arab homeland. Further, by the end of the 1970s Baghdad

leadership was almost openly stating that pan-Arabism was tomorrow's dream and that the Palestine problem had to wait: Iraq was the reality of the present. (117:134)

The Iran-Iraq War presented Saddam the opportunity to assume the role of a regional "paladin" by protecting the traditional-authoritarian neighbors from the threats of Islamic Iran. However, the war lasted far longer than he had anticipated and the Iranians proved far more resilient than initially believed. After eight years of conflict, the cease-fire left Saddam with the dominant military force in being but also huge debts to his supporting neighbors. The subsequent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, while having some justification in Iraqi history, was in fact a calculation that was dictated by economic and power politics.

The extraordinary defeat in detail of Iraq's armed forces by the United Nations coalition has effectively removed Saddam's immediate threat to the region. The longer term impacts, however, of the imposition of armed force by non-Arab nations remains to be seen. It is clear, however, that the Arab nationalist and Islamic heritage will place the Gulf war in distinctly Muslim contexts and Saddam, if he survives, will be initially excused of the defeat by virtue of the Arab mindset that places blame outside its door.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

The outcome of Desert Shield and Desert Storm has essentially validated the concept, role and mission of the United States Central Command. Aside from known pre-conflict deficiencies in strategic mobility, the military strategy and force structure proved more than adequate for the task. But beyond force structure, strategic mobility, desert warfare training and the ability to sustain a major military force projected into the Persian Gulf Region is the broader and more fundamental challenge of establishing and maintaining favorable relations with the traditional-authoritarian and traditional-distributive regimes in power.

It has been repeatedly highlighted in the foregoing discussion that the Arab outlook is remarkable for its introspection and historical field of vision: There often seems to be no peripheral recognition of dimension. The "glorious days of Islam," which, in form, translates to the high mark of the Arab culture, is rooted in the past when there was one united Arab people, an Arab nation under "one Supreme Caliph." (20:49) From the dissolution of Arab unity to the present day, the Arab perspective consistently lays blame on the outsider, the non-believer, the domination by foreign interests as the cause for "ungreatness." Thus, the litany and refrain harps again and again on the foreigner's subjugation of the Arab people.

Like the Shah, Saddam institutionalized his centrality of rule by constructing a "coup proof" state structure that depended on the parallel foundations of consumerism and force. While it can be argued that the Ba'th Party is based on some ideological coherence, it is also clear that the concentration of political power in the hands of Saddam and his dictatorial rule in fact parted from Ba'th principles. As a result, his appeal to the Arab masses is found in their 'yearning' for a strong leader who holds the power to eject the foreigner and reclaim Palestine. Like the Shah, Saddam sought to assume the mantle of Nasser as the overriding voice of leadership in the Middle East. And, like the Shah, Saddam increasingly relied on repression and oil wealth as a basis for political legitimacy. With a declining circle of realistic advice available to him, Saddam miscalculated the reaction of Islamic Iran to his invasion 10 years ago and he miscalculated the reactions of the West and the traditional Gulf states to his annexation of Kuwait.

The optimum outcome of the U.S.-led Gulf intervention would be the continued rule by Saddam in a militarily isolated Iraq. With the Iraqi military and economy shattered and the Arab's "strong leader" left in political power but effectively emasculated, the Arab masses will be unable to ignore Saddam's impotence. And, that would be the worst punishment possible.

United States policy-makers will seek an expanded influence and continued presence founded on the victory over Saddam's Iraq. Expanded arms sales to the friendly Gulf states will undoubtedly

follow. As the case of the Shah has illustrated, the fact that a ruling elite has the economic power to buy advanced armaments from Western nations eager for sales will often mask the internal by-products of the acquisition itself: foreign training, maintenance teams and the encroachment of alien values have to be considered as part of the hidden cost. Further, because all the states in the region are characterized by patrimonial rule, continued U.S. presence and support for friendly regimes will trigger domestic American issue groups to insist on political and social reforms within the borders of our friends.

...[T]he United States seems to be placing itself on a collision course with what might very be the most powerful ideological, political force in the Third World in the decades ahead. Apart from these negative perceptions, two major problem areas push the United States into a protagonist position with Populist Islam. The first is its uncritical support for regimes that promote Establishment Islam. Across the Muslim world populist Muslims have begun to refer to Establishment Islam as American Islam.....The second problem is the U.S.-Israeli connection, which greatly troubles the Muslim world. The tighter the United States strengthens this connection, the more tenuous its relationships become with countries inhabited by one billion Muslims. (21:135)

The perceived lack of women's rights, parliamentary government and secular law systems are likely to surface first. These domestic American demands will be presented as meaningful and well-intentioned efforts to produce reforms in those states that benefited from the projection of U.S. military force and that seek to benefit from the purchase of Western arms. The hazard, of course, is the mutual ignorance of both the American reformer and the Muslim citizen who will each see the other through their respective cultural prism. The result will be renewed animosity,

particularly in the Gulf states where Islam dictates the solutions to such matters and not a Western non-believing critic. Further, the West--and particularly the United States--must anticipate the strong likelihood that political and military cooperation against Iraq by Arab states will not necessarily mean significant gains in American influence: We remain the the foreigner so prevalent in Islamic history that has held undue influence at the expense of the Arab people. The predictable result will be an Arab withdrawal from the American embrace and American resentment over the appearance of perfidious and fickle allies.

There is some room for optimism. American field commanders in Desert Shield and Desert Storm obviously took great pains to sensitize their troops to the cultural aspects of Muslim society. The best examples were the prohibition of alcohol and pornography and the subdued nature of Christian religious services. Those simple steps undoubtedly translated into a visitor's respect for their host which will likely have implications far beyond their practicality of the day. By deploying the bulk of U.S. forces away from major Saudi and Gulf population centers and by imposing a discipline that merited the host government's appreciation, American soldiers, airmen and marines probably impressed the traditional societies far more than the U.S. military's extraordinarily effective logistics and firepower. The Gulf states perception of American respect will pave the way for bilateral agreements on prepositioned equipment and supplies, naval ports of call, and joint training exercises.

An enduring strategy for the attainment of United States goals in the Persian Gulf region must be wrapped around an objective of visibly educating the American public on the rich heritage of Islam and the shared values of the region's three great religions. While continued support for Israel will complicate U.S. relations with Arab states, it is obvious that there is significant room for an expanded American activism in diplomacy, trade and military cooperation. With essentially the evaporation of the Soviet threat to the region, there exists a unique but fragile opportunity to forge beyond commonplace political, military and economic agreements. Now is the time for policy-makers to lead the American public gently away from their preoccupation with Israel and bring into balance Arab concerns which have been ignored for the past half-century.



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